

REALISM VERSUS IDEALISM IN THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF FOREIGN POLICY - THE ARMS TRADE: A SOURCE
OF CONFLICT

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REALISM VERSUS IDEALISM IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREIGN

POLICY - THE ARAB TRADE: A SOURCE OF CONFLICT

- by -

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When one reads the daily newspaper or listens to a news broadcast - the only contact the average citizen has with his country's foreign policy - the awareness that long-term ideals are being sacrificed for short-term exigencies strikes a discordant note in one's sense of balance between right and wrong. One then wonders if policy-makers are aware of those ideals and if such ideals can ever become realistic objectives, or if instead life is composed of a series of short-term goals which must be constantly adjusted to the realities of the present and within which there is little, if any, room for ideals that may differ from such goals.

This paper will address itself to this dilemma and hopefully answer many of the questions raised by foreign policy. First, a theoretical analysis of idealism and realism in an international relations framework will be carried out, then, a dissertation on the role of the arms trade in foreign policy will follow, and finally an illustration of this confrontation between realism and idealism will be provided by focusing on Britain's arms trade with South Africa. The arms trade was selected to demonstrate the clash between realists and idealists in the formulation of foreign policy because it embodies all the main elements of their respective arguments.

The question of realism versus idealism is often regarded to be a philosophical argument which is not clearly applicable to today's extremely complex decision-making process in international relations - a reaction due as much to the inability to define these terms in a more precise manner as to the emotion, and consequent loss of objectivity,

that such a discussion precipitates. This paper will strive to present an objective analysis of these terms and relate them to the actual effects they have on the decision-making process of foreign policy.

Idealism tends to be exemplified by solutions which are the product not of analysis but of aspiration, and since the initial aspiration towards an end is an essential foundation of human thinking, idealism is a key element in all thought processes including decision-making. The best manner of defining this term is to focus on what are considered to be commonly professed ideals such as honesty, truthfulness, fidelity to obligation, kindness, fair play, lawfulness, and non-intervention in other people's affairs. By noting that these ideals are ethical restraints upon egoism which operate through force of conscience, custom, or law, the meaning of the term and its significance become clearer. If one then includes the allegiance to a universal goal, that is some state of affairs believed to be of benefit to all mankind (such as peace, goodwill, justice among nations, freedom, and a decent standard of living for all), the definition of idealism becomes complete.

Realism, on the other hand, is often characterized as marking the end of the utopian stage of human thinking as it places its emphasis on the acceptance of facts and on the analysis of their causes and consequences. Thus while idealism concentrates on aspirations, realism focuses on the acceptance of facts and, especially in a political context, on the nature and effects of power.

Having thus introduced these two concepts, one must then consider how they serve to shape the attitudes of different people, for it is through people that the conflict between them will be created. One concrete expression of this difference between idealist and realist

and a few other things. This was the first time
 that we had ever seen of these things and they were
 very different from the things we had seen before.

There was a small house in the middle of the

house and it was very old and it was very

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is provided by the opposition between intellectual and bureaucrat. The bureaucratic approach is fundamentally empirical as it is guided by precedent, by instinct, and by feel for the right thing. The intellectual, though, insists on general principles taken as absolute standards and adjudges policies to be good or bad by the extent to which they conform, or diverge, from these standards. While such an application of these concepts may serve to highlight an inevitable clash within a political context, idealism and realism are likewise reflected on a broader basis in the split between Left and Right. Thus the intellectual, a man of theory, will naturally gravitate towards the Left while the bureaucrat, a man of practice, gravitates towards the Right. In consequence the Right is often weak in theory while the Left suffers from a failure to translate theory into practice - a failure for which it blames the bureaucrats, but which is inherent in its utopian character.

In such a discussion one must also consider a social element which not only further delineates the schism between idealism and realism but also further emphasizes the relevance of their application to a political context. The key element is power. Interest defined in terms of power is the cornerstone of realism in international politics since it helps avoid the issue of motives of statesmen as well as philosophic and political sympathies as reasons for policy. Quincy Wright adds to this identity of realism with power by noting that realists base their philosophy on the proposition that "states seek to enhance their power" which leads them to conclude that power is the supreme value for which states strive.¹ If one then considers that the use of power, and

1. M. Rakove ed., Arms and Foreign Policy in the Nuclear Age (London, 1972), p.53.

in 1970 to the American people (American, 1970). The

relationship between the two countries is a

complex one. It is a relationship that is

characterized by a long history of

cooperation and friendship. The two

countries have a long history of

cooperation and friendship. The two

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more specifically force, or the threat of its use, as a means of applying pressure in international relations merely reflects the lack of an impartial judge under an established law, one can gain an insight into the conflict between realism and idealism which results. Force corrupts the purity and perverts the use of moral ideas and hence this application of realism, in the form of power, leads to an erosion of idealism in foreign policy. While idealists might respond to a question of power by citing their preference for universal goals such as peace, they are disregarding the fact that ideals are as much an instrument of national power as the weapons of war, for in as much as power is used to influence other people or nations this can be done by frightening them or converting them. Men are motivated by faith and moral sentiment as well as by fear and the instinct of self-preservation.

Having thus established a theoretical base and having shown its very real link to a political environment, one must now establish its relevance to international relations and more specifically to the implementation of foreign policy.

Osgood notes that the conflict of ideals and self-interest within an international context dates back deep into history as he quotes Pericles' Funeral Oration which proclaimed that only Athens obeyed the dictates of the highest morality because "we alone do good to our neighbors not upon a calculation of interest, but in the confidence of freedom and in a frank and fearless spirit".¹ He likewise proposed distinguishing definitions for these terms within an international context.

1. Quoted in R. Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1953) p.1.

By narrowing down realism so that it becomes national self-interest, he states that national self-interest becomes a state of affairs valued solely for its benefit to the nation while an ideal is a state of affairs, or standard of conduct, worthy of achievement by virtue of its universal moral value.

Such a definition obviously leaves out many important elements, but a closer look will show that all one is really required to do is expand upon that which is implied in the basic definition. Thus when one considers idealism in an international text one notes that this allegiance to a universal goal, or a universal moral value, may be such that it demands dedication to the welfare of other nations and peoples without regard for one's own national welfare. The ultimate form of this idealism being national self-sacrifice which demands the deliberate surrender of one's own national self-interest for the sake of other nations or for the sake of some moral principle or universal goal. Some even envisage this as the surrender of national survival itself if so required. Nevertheless, since international society is morally and institutionally imperfect, even if perfect ideals were pursued disappointment would follow because the effective means fall short of ideal standards. Hence the idealist is beginning to acknowledge that in the real world of conflicting national purposes ideal goals are not obtained by moral fervor alone but rather by a pragmatic calculation of the means to an end and by the rational consideration of the consequences of a given action. An example of this might be Britain's Labour party being able to pursue a more substantial anti-apartheid policy with regards to South Africa having considered the effect that such a stance will have among Black African nations as well as being aware that the vital sea lanes in the area will not be significantly endangered as a

result of British non-cooperation with the South African regime.

The concept of realism likewise suffers from such narrow interpretation, and even though one might be willing to acknowledge the preponderance of self-interest in such a context, one must be prepared to provide it with greater sustenance.

One such supporting concept is that of national security which, due to its close association with national self-preservation, provides national egoism with a rational and moral justification which renders the primacy of self-interest among national ends an indisputable and unavoidable reality of international politics. In practice this means an understanding that the exercise of national power (that is the ability of one nation to influence others to do its will) is considered to be the most important means of achieving national ends. Thus international relations are bound to be characterized by a struggle for power among nations in pursuit of their own interests. The realist, therefore, considering this competition for power to be the distinguishing characteristic of international relations, is sceptical of attempts to solve international conflict through appeals to sentiment and principle. He feels instead that power conflicts can only be mitigated by balancing power against power.

Osgood notes that a true realist must be aware of the interdependence of realism and idealism, and that even on grounds of national expediency there are valid arguments for maintaining the vitality of a country's ideals.¹ One may well question the validity of meriting the realist,

1. R.E.Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest on America's Foreign Relations, p.15.

alone, with such wisdom, but it certainly does underline the dilemma which a nation faces when attempting to reconcile its self-interest with its ideals. Quite obviously national sentiment restricts the extent to which a nation can be expected to transcend its own self-interest for the sake of universal principles or the welfare of others. Yet one can not deny that idealism has great influence on the actions of both nations and individuals and in many cases moderates aggressive manifestations of self-interest. Nevertheless, as noted above in the Britain-South Africa example, this moral force seems to be most compelling when the pursuit of ideals coincides with the national advantage.

This integration of realism and idealism also may create a situation where a nation may be called upon to sacrifice its ideals in the short-run in order to achieve them in the long-run. This will require individuals to reconcile the immediate demands of national expediency with the traditional principles of their ideals which may well lead to an inconsistency between their ideals and their actions. As the contradictions between ideals and self-interest multiply, the problem becomes infinitely more complex. Balancing present loss for future gain becomes increasingly difficult, and when such an operation requires the compromising of one's principles, in order to promote them, man's limited reason is indeed strained.

Osgood sums up the importance of idealism and realism as generating factors in the making of foreign policy as well as the problems the conflict between them creates superbly when he states: "In its broadest aspect, the interdependence of universal ideals and national self-interest is simply a reflection of the fact that man has a moral sense as well as an ego and that both parts demand satisfaction. For this reason the

most compelling national ends are those self-interested ends, like survival, which are most easily reconciled with idealistic ends, and those idealistic ends, like the minimum standards of international decency, which are most compatible with national self-interest. By the same token, the instability of self-assertive egoism and altruistic idealism can be attributed, in large part, to the incompatibility of the former with fundamental ideals and of the latter with the most basic national interests."¹

Once the conflict between these two concepts has been incorporated into the international scene, as was done above, one must then firmly establish that the making of foreign policy is indeed directly effected by this conflict. George Kennan and Max Beloff do this quite adequately even though they are both rather obviously partial to the realist approach. Kennan proposes that the conduct of foreign relations should not be considered as a purpose in itself for a political society particularly a democratic one, but rather as a means of pursuing some higher and more comprehensive purpose. He thus states that a political society does not live to conduct foreign policy but rather that it conducts foreign policy in order to live which implies a belief that foreign policy is merely a means to an end. While the end being pursued, mainly Lockean principles such as life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the protection of property rights, contains elements of both realism and idealism, Kennan clearly demonstrates his preference as he focuses on the need to guarantee these rights from external or political intrusion by protecting citizens who are engaged in private activity abroad.

1. R.E.Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations, p.17.

He views idealism in foreign policy as being devoid of an awareness of the power factor in the scheme of foreign relations, and blames such lack of awareness for such things as the negotiation of an extensive framework of treaties of arbitration and conciliation. Noting that by the 1930's ninety-seven international agreements of arbitration or conciliation had been ratified and yet the result of all this work was the arbitration of only two disputes based on these instruments (and there is no reason to believe that they would not have been arbitrated any way in the absence of such treaties), he suggests that such idealism only masked the realities of the power conflicts experienced in two World Wars. This leads to his approach to morality in international relations which he states as: "Morality in governmental method, as a matter of conscience and preference on the part of our people - yes. Morality as a general criterion for measuring and comparing the behaviour of different states - no".¹ He adds that there are no universally applicable standards of morality for individuals, beyond obvious rules of prudence common to most of mankind due to the necessity to preserve the family structure and the good order in society, and thus how much more difficult it has to be to find universal rules for government. Especially when the governments must engage in the chore of imposing restraint by man over man as a result of man's irrational nature, selfishness, obstinacy, and tendency to violence. He consequently, not surprisingly, urges less sentimentality and less eagerness to be morally impressive in relations between governments. While one may adopt to disagree with

1. G.F.Kennan, Realities of American Foreign Policy (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954) p.50.

such an approach, it is important to consider it, for it highlights the incessant struggle between realism and idealism.

Max Beloff also favours the realist approach but adds to the discussion by focusing on what he considers to be shortcomings on the part of the idealists and in the process raises some very interesting points. He addresses the question of recognition of one country by another by first pointing to the traditional view that the only test is whether or not the government is in control of the national territory and is likely to remain so, and then, noting that democracies are not happy with this version. He explains this dislike by observing that individuals tend to want to elevate personal relationships to an international level and thus since one selects one's friends, they feel that it is possible to choose those governments with whom one has dealings and to ignore those of whose ideologies or practices one disapproves.¹ This attitude is coupled with the belief, stated or unstated, that nonrecognition will hence lead to the overthrow of the unpopular regime and the rise of a better social order, an expectation which history shows to be misguided (U.S.-China). Such an observation also emphasizes one more area of contention between realists and idealists as the former note that in international affairs it is governments, not people, with whom one must deal while this affronts the latter who yearns for people to people relations. Beloff summarizes his identification of the public with idealism and his criticism of such attitudes by stating "what the public mind largely acts upon in foreign policy is a series of myths about the past - myths which indulge democracies in the fallacy that the right course is always ascertainable

1. M. Beloff, Foreign Policy and the Democratic Process (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1955) p.42.

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and practicable".¹

As noted already, these two figures are biased quite unambiguously toward the realist approach to foreign policy, and yet this in no way lessens their contribution to the discussion. By focusing on areas of contention between realists and idealists in the formulation of foreign policy, they more accurately and explicitly demonstrate that these two divergent forces are in constant struggle with each other on matters of foreign policy.

To provide what has been largely a theoretical discussion of the inherent strife between realism and idealism and of the manner in which such conflict is applicable to the formulation of foreign policy with real meaning, one must focus upon the foreign policy of a specific nation and try to ascertain whether in fact such conflict exists. Since the United States foreign policy is universally scrutinized, it seems to be the best choice. Also rather than pointing to a rather obvious confrontation between groups with opposing views, it will be more enlightening to note how idealists must struggle and compromise when faced with the simple realities of international affairs. Thus as Osgood observes

"liberal idealists and international reformers, who seek to spread liberty, equal opportunity, and material progress throughout the world, will find that these worthy objects depend, first of all, upon the survival of the United States and its allies; and realizing this, they will be forced to put the exigencies of power politics ahead of their moral sensibilities. Similarly, if they want to pursue their ideals effectively, they must base American aid to foreign peoples primarily upon the power advantage of the United States and only secondarily upon humanitarian considerations. They must, at times, support reactionary and antidemocratic regimes with arms and money.

1. M. Beloff, Foreign Policy and the Democratic Process, p.94.

They must even put themselves in the position of resisting with force the misguided proponents of a social revolution, which arises, in large part, from basic human aspirations which the American mission itself claims to fulfill." (1)

Although one may contest some of the sweeping assumptions which such an interpretation makes, it does, nonetheless, aptly describe the inherent conflict of these two concepts in actual situations.

To allay the feeling that such conflict exists only due to the rather exceptional environment that has been created today, one need only observe the American Founding Fathers as they struggled to resolve the dilemma posed by the conflict of ideals and realities. Of the Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson was, perhaps, the most addicted to theories and dreams. It is thus not surprising that he stated:

"were I to indulge my own theory, I should wish them to practice neither commerce nor navigation, but to stand with Europe precisely on the footing of China. We should thus avoid wars, and all our citizens would be husbandmen." (2)

Yet when Spain was reluctant to cede Florida, it was Jefferson who confidently stated:

"if we push them strongly with one hand, holding out a price in the other, we shall certainly obtain the Floridas, and all in good time." (3)

On broader terms, the same contrast is evident. The United States' early foreign policy voiced the ideals of avoiding entanglements with Europe and hence the avoidance of wars in which Americans had no

1. R.E.Osgood, Ideals and Self-Interest in America's Foreign Relations, p.438.
2. L.Halle, Dream and Reality (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p.110.
3. J.Farrell, Theory and Reality in International Relations (N.Y.: Columbia Univ.Press, 1967) p.81.

interest, and yet the first major action on the international scene was to enter into a Treaty of Eternal Alliance with France. Hence the ideals were, at least in part, overridden by the real considerations such as the need for support in American claims against Britain. One could obviously cite many more such examples, but these should suffice to firmly establish the existence of a real conflict between realism and idealism that most definitely affects the final form of any foreign policy.

Finally, as a means of eliminating any doubts that may remain concerning either the existence of this conflict or its effects on the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, one can observe statements or articles by those who are involved in the actual decision-making process of foreign policy which might describe their personal attitude towards this question. For this purpose, I have selected statements made by Henry Kissinger, United States Secretary of State, and an article published by Edward Heath, former British Prime Minister.

For years, the annual foreign policy reviews by President Nixon, issued under the guidance of Kissinger, emphasized that the United States gave precedence to American "interests" rather than American ideals. But, in an interview with the New York Times, Kissinger seems to have second thoughts on such an approach in light of occurrences in Portugal and Greece. He "regrets that he was too willing to accept the political status quo in his first five years, even if this meant aiding authoritarian governments whose internal policies he detested."¹ He thus reflects the internal struggle between his own ideals and the course of action dictated by what is perceived to be the realism of

1. J. Reston of the New York Times in The Sunday Times (October, 13, 1974) p.14.

the situation. That he remains a realist, nevertheless is readily apparent as he goes on to state that "the Kennedy period is likely to be seen as the end of an era rather than as the beginning of one. The last great flowering of the naive version of American idealism."¹

Heath, meanwhile, in an article of his published in Foreign Affairs clearly demonstrates an awareness of the relationship between realism and idealism as he notes,

"Looking back at the foreign policies of Britain and the United States since 1800 one sees two strands woven closely together - the strands of idealism and realism." (2)

He then adds that in present times the harmony between them has faltered with a resultant inevitable increase in tension between the claims of the two. He then admits that under this tension "it has been the instinct of the British to plump for realism."³

Hence it is quite obvious that these concepts of realism and idealism are much more than mere topics of philosophical discussion. They not only display clear relevance to the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, but as demonstrated above, are most definitely in the minds of the actual decision-makers themselves.

In conclusion one notes that there is in fact an inherent source of conflict between idealism and realism at all levels of human endeavour which can be explained, perhaps, by the assertion that the reconciliation of ideals with self-interest is per se one of the

1. J. Reston, of the New York Times in The Sunday Times (October 13, 1974), p.14.

2. E. Heath, "Realism in British Foreign Policy" Foreign Affairs (Oct. 1969) p.39.

3. Ibid., p.40.

central problems of human experience. It is therefore hardly surprising that such conflict should manifest itself in the decision-making processes. All hope of reconciliation is not lost, though, for, as illustrated above, the decision-makers are aware of the problem and may thus come to realize that the utopian who dreams that it is possible to eliminate self-assertion from politics and to base a political system on morality alone is just as wide of the mark as the realist who believes that altruism is an illusion and that all political action is based on self-seeking. This elimination of destructive polarization is unquestionably the first necessary step in solving the problems created by this conflict of interest.

Having thus laid the theoretical foundation of this clash between realism and idealism, one must then select a particular aspect of foreign policy within which one can observe the effects of the clash. In this case it will be the arms trade.

To establish the unique position which the arms trade enjoys in the formulation of foreign policy, it is first necessary to explain what is meant by the "arms trade". Having done this, one must then identify the special characteristic that virtually ensures its incorporation into a nation's foreign policy,

The arms trade can be broadly considered to be a by-product of the complex economic, military, and political forces that determine the creation, maintenance, and use of armed forces - regular or irregular. Likewise, the relationship between the recipient's need for arms and the supplier's need for influence uniquely characterizes the arms trade and thus establishes the importance of its role in foreign policy by means of two linkages - security and power.

Nevertheless, while the logic of such an argument points to the undeniable existence of such a link, such a relationship is meaningless unless it is perceived by those involved in the formulation of policy. The statement of Paul Nitze, then United States Assistant Secretary of Defense, in the 1967 Congressional hearings on military aid dissuades any such fears as he noted:

"Our entire arms policy is in fact an instrument of foreign policy, and the military sales program is an accurate reflection of considered agreement at the highest levels of authority." (1)

Having thus identified the arms trade with the formulation of foreign policy, one must then complete the picture by looking at the administrative body that transforms the commercial production of armaments into such a powerful instrument of foreign policy. Before doing so, though, it is pertinent to observe the conflicting pressures that are brought to bear upon the foreign policy makers due to the nature of the arms trade. Once the forces demanding restraint and those encouraging participation in this trade have been identified, one must follow up and describe the forum within which the different views are voiced, as noted above. Such a description, together with the self-acknowledged posture of some of the major suppliers of arms, will provide a useful insight into the internal conflict thus generated as well as of the outcome of such a conflict of interests.

That there is active restraint on the arms trade and that such restraint is effective, at least in some countries, is clearly demonstrated by a statement made in 1967 by Henry Kuss, former head

1. Quoted in L.A. Frank, The Arms Trade in International Relations (London: Praeger, 1969) p.157.

of the United States' arms sales program,

"in the previous five years the government has turned down more arms sales to developing countries than it has sanctioned" (1)

Acknowledging the existence of such restraint is only the first step, and thus it becomes necessary to look at the specific nature of such restraint. Certain idealists will point to "world opinion" as the vanguard of such a pressure, but such a concept is not only vague, it also overlooks the identity of the arms trade with a nation's foreign policy which was established above. While it may be true that policy-makers are sensitive to the opinions of other nations their primary concern lies in what they consider to be their own country's interests. In this context, such restraint is reflected in the personal ideals of the policy-makers themselves as well as the embodiment of the national ideals. That domestic rather than international opinion has acted as a restraint on arms sales is clearly illustrated by numerous examples. In 1967 a critical analysis of the purpose and methods of American arms sales prepared by the staff of the senate Foreign Relations Committee led to the Foreign Military Sales Act of 1968. The Act passed as a direct result of Congressional pressure which reflected the public unease about the volume and scope of American military aid and sales. More currently, the collapse of a foreign aid authorization bill under the weight of restrictions on military aid to Chile, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, South Korea, and Turkey in October, 1974 clearly demonstrates the strength of domestic opinion. Sweden, in 1968 yielded to the public outcry of left-wing

1. Quoted in J. Stanley, The International Trade in Arms (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972) p.13.

radicals, for domestic political reasons, over sales to Argentina, and this resulted in a Swedish embargo of arms sales to Latin America (except for Chile and Venezuela).

Restraints, though, are not limited to moral considerations but rather cover the full spectrum of foreign relations. Hence allied military considerations, issues of international and domestic politics, and many other such preoccupations all demand close control over arms exports.

The pressures to sell, though, are much greater than those not to sell and include: the defense ministry's desire to bolster a military ally and to lower its own procurement costs through the lengthening of production runs; the finance ministry's balance of payments considerations and what it sees as the prospect of a direct gain of revenue to the exchequer if the sale involves new or used government-owned weapons; and the foreign ministry's desire to export arms in order to strengthen existing political bonds or forge new ones. More specifically, though, the pressures to engage in the arms trade can be divided into 1) hegemonic/strategic, 2) national arms-production; 3) balance of payments, 4) surplus arms, and 5) social gain, and these will be considered in detail below.

The question of hegemony or strategic considerations underlines the fact that the arms trade is carried on primarily for reasons of power. While it may well be true that the United States and the Soviet Union are the two powers for whom hegemony is the primary reason for engaging in the arms trade, it is also true that all the other powers participating in this trade have this very same objective at, or near, the top of their respective priorities. Such an objective is founded on the belief that one can buy political influence by selling

or giving away arms, and available information certainly tends to support such a view. While critics of the arms trade point to the exceptional cases where such attempts have failed, they do so by overlooking the vast numbers of cases where it has been successful and ignore the fact that in those cases where it failed arms were clearly not the central issue.

That the ultimate result of the interaction of arms and influence brought about by the arms trade should be the transfer of control to the "outside" of a country's previously internal policies as well as its foreign and military policies is scarcely surprising, considering the manner in which military aids and/or sales work. Besides strengthening friends, the arms provide justification for sending out large technical support teams to the ally concerned, thus providing an opportunity to exercise some control over the military policy of the client. These complex armament systems also entail extensive training programs which offer the opportunity for the establishment of a close working relationship between members of the supplier's armed forces and military authorities in key foreign countries. Finally, the training programs also provide an excellent opportunity for ideological indoctrination which in fact forms a part of all training especially when the Soviet Union is the supplier. The case of Egypt with 10,000 Soviet technicians and advisers integrated at all levels in the Egyptian military complex is a clear example of how such an arrangement works, and in answer to those who herald the Soviet effort in Egypt as a disastrous failure one needs only to observe continued Soviet influence in spite of what seems an insurmountable religious obstacle and extraordinary efforts by the Americans to disrupt that influence.

The industrial aspect of the arms trade ranks just below hegemony as a reason for favouring active participation in such an endeavour. The reason for such importance lies in the critical contribution that arms exports make to the maintenance of a national arms-production capacity in the case of all arms-manufacturing countries, except for the United States and the Soviet Union. Therefore, for those countries, expansion into the export market may well provide the only means for the arms manufacturers to remain in business without a government subsidy. France is perhaps the best example of such a condition. As de Gaulle pursued the objective of building a nuclear deterrent, the requirement for conventional weapons were inevitably scaled down, thus threatening the survival of firms such as Dassault, the French aircraft company. Soon the firm's commercial well-being became heavily dependent on the export market as exemplified by the estimate that 500 of the 850 Mirage III's manufactured in 1969 were for export.¹ More recently, Dassault has been in the headlines in what has been termed "the sale of the century" as NATO proceeds to renew its Air Forces and has the choice between Dassault's F.1 and two American aircraft, the YF-16 and YF-17. France's principal sales argument focuses on the survival of the European aircraft industry, and the intensity of her commitment is quite aptly illustrated by the "Stehlin affair". General Stehlin, a former French Air Force Chief of Staff, stated unequivocally that both American aircraft were superior to the F-1 and was consequently branded a traitor by certain members of the General Assembly and forced to retire prematurely. Such reliance on arms exports is not limited

1. J.Stanley, The International Trade in Arms, p.69.

to France, though, and cases such as the British Company, Racal Electronics, producing the squad call manpack two-way radio, exporting 99% of its 1967-68 output, and the Belgian firm Fabrique Nationale d'Armes de Guerre exporting 90% of production to 129 countries certainly illustrate this widespread dependence on the arms trade.¹

Closely related to this maintenance of a national arms-production capacity is the ability of the arms trade to lengthen production runs. This lengthening of the production run allows the manufacturer to exploit all the advantages of economies of scale and results in a lower-priced final product which allows the national defense establishment to purchase it at this lower price and also makes the product more competitive in the international armaments market.

Another element favouring the promotion of arms sales is the balance of payments situation. The effect of military activities on the balance of payments is something which has haunted both Washington and London. Hence the balance of payments cost of military deployment overseas has led to "offset agreements" between Britain and Germany in 1956 and the United States and Germany in 1961. Under these agreements Germany has agreed to offset a certain proportion of the foreign exchange costs to Britain and the United States in stationing troops in Germany by making arms purchases from those countries. That the attitude of supplier countries goes beyond the off setting of outflows of exchange caused by the overseas deployment of military forces is illustrated by France's concern for her balance of payments, and the role that arms exports will play in alleviating the problem. Likewise, one only needs to observe the

1. J. Stanley, The International Trade in Arms, p.70.

reaction of most Western democracies to the increase in the price of oil to note the importance of arms exports on the balance of payments. In many cases, the first reaction was to offer the latest, most sophisticated, weapons systems to the Arabs in the hopes of both obtaining special favours and offsetting the inevitable massive drain on the exchange.

The importance of arms exports in correcting a balance of payments deficit can be explained rather briefly without going into extensive detail. Normally the favourable or unfavourable balance of trade is quite small compared to the total volume of goods exchanged, and thus relatively small shifts in items making up the balance can correct any deficits. Since weapons systems are high value items, a few well placed ones can significantly alleviate a deficit or even reverse an adverse balance. While the monetary return on these goods is large though the net return is of equal importance. Weapons use a high proportion of national knowledge and skills and a relatively high proportion of materials that are domestically produced, and consequently items such as aircraft represent an extremely favourable conversion of national effort into saleable goods. Hence the intrinsic value and high "conversion ratio" makes weapons particularly tempting items to sell for the purpose of increasing foreign exchange income. If to this one adds the value of spare parts, the need to train the users, the sale of auxiliary equipment including such things as the construction of airfields, the amounts involved rapidly become highly significant. It is thus no wonder that the preoccupation with the balance of payments should most definitely increase the determination to sell arms.

The matter of what to do with surplus arms also enters the picture, especially in the 1970's, as both the Vietnam war and the fact that NATO and the Warsaw Pact are entering into major new generations of combat aircraft and armour have created a tremendous bulge of arms on the supply side. These countries are faced with three options in disposing with these surplus arms. They can be scrapped, demilitarized, or sold.

Scrapping is the best way to eliminate the transfer of arms to undesirable localities but is also the least attractive option financially. In 1967 an M-47 surplus Patton tank had a scrap value of \$2000 while the purchase contract for fully serviceable M-47 had a price tag of \$32,000.¹ Hence the 7,000 or so surplus M-47 or M-48 tanks in Western Europe would have a \$14 million scrap value versus a \$224 million reselling value, a strong economic argument indeed against this first option.

Demilitarization, on the other hand, involves the removal of certain lethal parts (in most cases), leaving the system serviceable for civilian use and has involved such cases as Britain's conversion of Sherman tanks into Sherrick tractors as well as the reselling of "sporterized" rifles.² With increased civilian technology and greater restrictions on the outlet for non-automatic rifles, such an option is hardly applicable. It thus becomes a question of scrapping or selling, and as noted above the economic repercussions are quite substantial.

1. J. Stanley, The International Trade in Arms, p.52.

2. Ibid.

Finally one must consider the social benefits which the arms-exporting country enjoys and which are therefore threatened by any motion to reduce or suspend such a practice. These benefits include high employment, development of skilled labour, and dynamic regional policies. For the United States in the period 1962-66 this export market consisted of \$9 billion worth of orders and options which represented 1.2 million man-years of employment throughout all fifty states as well as \$1 billion of profits to the companies concerned.¹ A government can scarcely afford to take such figures lightly.

Besides the unemployment which would result from a cutback in the production of arms one must consider the skilled labour that would be affected. In today's society, skilled labour has come to be regarded as a national asset. The conservation and management of such an asset are problems for any society with a free labour market and political representatives anxious to promote the well-being of constituencies where defense industries are located. Such an attitude applies equally well to regional policy, and there is evidence that a government's employment and regional policies are closely tied to the defense industry. Hence the Italian government writes into its defense contracts that 30% of the work must be given to the South. In the United States such an approach was well exploited by the late Senator Russell of Georgia and the late Congressman Rivers of South Carolina who created defense empires in their respective states.

1. J. Stanley, The International Trade in Arms, p.72.

Nevertheless it would be naive to presume that the social arguments are always compelling, and one can cite numerous examples of cutbacks in defense and aerospace spending which resulted in significant regional unemployment and loss of skilled labour. Yet one must not overlook the political pressures that such social conditions represent.

It is thus immediately apparent that the pressure on policy-makers is quite heavily biased towards the maintenance or even expansions of the arms trade. While one may be tempted to pursue the implications of such a bias, such an endeavour is beyond the scope of this paper which will instead focus on the administrative body where such pressures are brought to bear.

The emphasis is on the administrative body rather than the legislative because it is in the former where the vast majority of conflicts of interest are resolved while the latter concerns itself with the few most spectacular cases. While the bulk of the information hereby presented concerns the American structure, it is generally accepted that all nations have similar arrangements.

Those who are unaware of the nature of government control on the arms trade and thus observe that the production and selling of these arms is carried out, in the vast majority of the cases, by private firms, may well wonder if the only motive for the arms trade is the maximization of profit, and all else is nothing but window-dressing. The fact is that governments do exercise almost complete control over the export of arms by means of export licenses. Critics may well point to those isolated, newsworthy, cases where arms were shipped in spite of such restrictions, but again the overwhelming

majority of the trade operates within these restrictions. If the consignment is considered to be in any way controversial, the matter is referred to a joint meeting for the airing of all views.

It is within this body that the pressure of conflicting interests is felt. The foreign ministry, and others so inclined, can exercise restraining power, and the struggle between realists and idealists is quite apparent. For this purpose, Britain has the Arms Working Party and the United States has the State/Defense Coordinating Committee and attention will be concentrated on the latter.

The State/Defense Coordinating Committee is primarily a State Department/Pentagon entity, but it also contains the Agency for International Development (AID), the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), and the Treasury. The Treasury raises question of terms of credit and balance of payments while AID and ACDA provide additional restraints to those advocated by the State Department. Thus AID may oppose an arms sale which may retard the economic development of non-industrial nations (an effect which has been quite evident in the arms trade with Latin America) while ACDA may voice opposition by virtue of its general responsibility for arms control. In many cases these two may be considered to be the embodiment of idealism although it is obvious that each agency is primarily interested in pursuing its own objectives. If the issue is not resolved by this committee, it goes to the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, then to the Secretary of State, and, if necessary, to the President himself. The general rule is such that an export license cannot be granted by one ministry against the opposition of another without a decision being taken by the politicians, thus preventing bureaucratic rule.

Most countries also control the retransfer of arms from the country of destination to a third country through the use of "end-use" clauses which prohibit retransfer without the prior approval of the manufacturing country. The lack of such a clause was recently illustrated by Britain's embarrassment when Jordan resold British-made tanks to South Africa.

That governments exercise complete control over the trade is thus undeniable, and the lack of general principles on arms exports is not due to the lack of government control but rather to the fact that international affairs shift too frequently. A British Foreign Office Memorandum to a House of Commons Select Committee in 1959 clearly stated this condition as it noted:

"There is little room for generalization on Her Majesty's Government's policy on the export of arms, since each case is treated in the light of its individual merits or disadvantages." (1)

While it may be true that there are no general principles that are followed in the conduct of the arms trade, a country's posture on the issue can be ascertained through either the statements made by its policy-makers or through their actions in the field. Thus the United States' position was clearly stated in 1963 by Robert McNamara, then Secretary of Defense, as he stated the three objectives of American arms sales:

- "1. Promote the defensive strength of our allies, consistent with our political-economic objectives.
2. Promote the concept of co-operative logistics and standardization with our allies.
3. Offset the unfavourable balance of payments resulting from essential United States military deployment abroad."²

1. Quoted in J. Stanley, The International Trade in Arms, p.16.

2. Quoted in G. Thayer's The War Business, The International Trade in Armaments (London: Paladin 1969) p.184.

That such a statement was not mere rhetoric is evidenced by the formation of the Office for International Logistics Negotiations (ILN) under Henry Kuss with a stated objective to triple sales within a nine year period (1962-1972). There is evidence also that these objectives are just as valid today if one notes the following: the balance of payments is a continual preoccupation; one of the principal political arguments in favour of an American aircraft in "the sale of the century" is the need to standardize NATO weapons systems; and in the post-Vietnam era there is an emphasis on greater self-reliance for security and thus a need to strengthen those allies through the Military Assistance Program.

While no comparable statement has been forthcoming from a British Minister, Britain's approach to the export of arms can be evaluated by noting the restructuring of the organisation responsible for promoting the acquisition of British arms abroad. In 1958 the post of Assistant Controller of Munitions was created to promote British arms exports. Nevertheless, Britain fell further behind in her sales and in 1964, with the experience of ever-increasing balance of payments difficulties, came the need for fresh government action to promote arms exports. Thus Dennis Healey, then Secretary of State for Defense, announced, in July 1965, that Donald Stokes (now Lord Stokes), then managing director of Leyland Motor Corporation, was to help in "the promotion of exports of defense equipment, and on any changes of organization that may be necessary for this purpose."¹

A direct result of this was the appointment of Raymond Brown, then Chairman of Racal Electronics which had proved to be an outstanding

1. House of Commons Debates, vol. 716, 21 July 1965, Column 1560.

successful exporter of military equipment, as Head of Defense Sales. There is thus little doubt as to what British objectives in the trade are.

France's position on the arms trade, meanwhile, is amply described in a finance commission report to the National Assembly on 25 October 1967 noting that "as a purchasing nation we are not and cannot be sufficiently armed to realize sufficiently long production runs and thus lower the net costs of procurement. We therefore have to provide not only for national utilization of military material, but also for its export."¹ Such a posture certainly explains her unwillingness to abide by such embargoes as the one on South Africa as well as the reversal in 1967 on arms to the Middle East as the Arab market became more desirable. While her sales organisation is less formal than those in Britain and the United States, it is just as professional. The Direction des Affaires Internationales (DAI) organizes the dispatch overseas of military missions and displays of French weapons. The promotion of aircraft is done through the Office General de l'Air (OGA) and the Office Francaise d'Exportation de Materiel Aeronautique (OFEMA) both of which are under government control. Rather than duplicating each other's efforts, the sales area of these two outfits are divided geopolitically so that potential combatants negotiate with different sales teams even if the product for sale is the same. Thus while India and Israel have negotiated with OFEMA, Pakistan and the Arab powers have negotiated with OGA.²

1. Quoted in SIPRI, The Arms Trade with the Third World (London: Paul Elek, 1971) p.257.

2. J. Stanley, The International Trade in Arms, p.95.

There is therefore no doubt but that countries are heavily committed to the arms trade, and the conflict between ideal and real objectives is clearly exemplified by talking of peace while distributing weapons of war. In a television interview in January 1964, Dean Rusk, then United States Secretary of State, pointed out this conflict between aspirations and reality: "I recall that at the United Nations General Assembly, at a time when all members were voting unanimously for disarmament, 70 members were at that moment asking us for military assistance".¹ The conflict is thus not limited to the supply side of the trade.

The complexity of the dilemma facing the decision-makers is illustrated by the matter of United States arms exports to Israel. The problem becomes one of balancing the need to preserve Israel's security against the dangers of a U.S.-Soviet confrontation as well as the further alienation of the Arab countries. The problem becomes infinitely more complex if one considers the attempt to restrain Israel from moving towards a nuclear option and the fact that a balance of power based on parity is not acceptable due to Israel's inability to fight a prolonged war. The options are far from simple.

Thus it is possible to separate the forces of realism advocating hegemony, production runs, and balance of payments considerations as the basis upon which the arms trade should be based from the idealists who point to the need for economic development, the threat to peace created by armaments, and the sheer waste of resources of such a practice. While the conflict, as noted above, is by no means limited to the clash between realists and idealists, this issue is at the centre

1. Quoted in G.Kemp "Arms Sales and Arms control in the developing countries" The World Today (September, 1966), p.391.

of most such strife. Although it may be true that the pressures are heavily biased in favour of those advocating the expansion of the arms trade, it is equally true that those advocating restraint can be extremely effective when organized appropriately.

Finally governments, in deciding whether or not to engage in the arms trade, should keep the long-term effects of arms aid in mind at all times. One insight into these effects is illustrated by an interview of an exiled moderate in the jungles of Cambodia (while Prince Sihanouk was still in power) as the exile asked, "Do you Americans realize what you are doing to us? We beat him (Sihanouk) in repeated elections and parliaments. But everytime we made a show of force against his control of almost everything, there were those American guns, those American police patrol cars those American walkie-talkies and riot control methods, their users trained by Americans in your police academies. What do you want us to think of Americans when we get power, as we someday will!"¹

The case of Great Britain's arms trade with South Africa is an excellent illustration of this struggle between realists and idealists in the formulation of foreign policy because it embodies all the high pressure elements of the arms trade. The strategic and economic considerations are therefore, not surprisingly, focussed upon by those who favour such a trade while its opponents emphasize the abhorrence of South African internal policy and the need to condemn such a policy not only verbally but through forthright action as well, meaning an arms embargo. The splitting of this confrontation along political party lines provides the generating force

1. Davis, S. "Patterns and Problems in U.S. Foreign Policy" International Affairs, (October, 1965).

that yields continuous debate as well as the disclosure of information which would otherwise remain buried in Whitehall's archives.

One can thus fit the available facts into the model discussed earlier by separating the arguments favouring the arms trade with South Africa from those opposed to such a trade and fully analyzing their respective strengths. Hence, once the nature of the opposing views has been identified, the link between these various pressures and British policy-making can then be established by noting any changes in Britain's policy towards South Africa associated with British domestic political changes.

Additionally, in this particular case, consideration must be given to the "legitimizing" role of arms. This shall be done not by means of a philosophical discussion on whether the providing of weapons to a regime is in itself an acceptance of the legitimacy of that regime but rather through an analysis of perception. Thus if the South African government perceives the provision of certain weapon systems to be a tacit acknowledgement of its legitimacy, a view opposing such an interpretation becomes meaningless. Such an analysis can be conducted by exploring the motives behind the South African insistence that Britain should provide the hardware necessary to defend the Cape route.

The Conservative party has traditionally assumed the role of the realist in national defense matters and in this case has focused upon the strategic importance of South Africa due to its geographical position as well as the obligations imposed on Britain by the Simonstown Agreement as sensible reasons why armament shipments to South Africa should be continued. Thus, in April 1964 Sir Alec Douglas-Home, then Prime Minister, invited Mr. Harold Wilson to look at the strategic

value of the Simonstown Agreement noting that political prejudices should not be allowed to prejudice the possibilities of defending the Commonwealth.¹ Such a position has remained basically unchanged in the ensuing ten years. That the Conservatives have demonstrated a keen awareness of the economic factors involved in the case is undeniable and will be considered in detail below, but the core of their argument has been oriented so as to avoid giving the impression that they are willing to allow economic matters to override ideological considerations.

The strategic considerations focus on the growing threat presented by a rapidly-expanding Soviet Navy which appears to be both ready and willing to fill the power vacuum created by the British withdrawal from the Indian Ocean, on the importance of the Cape route to Britain's survival, and on the necessity to maintain a reliable air route in support of British forces East of Suez. The Soviet threat provided by this virtually unchallenged naval force in the area is very real indeed and is certain to become worse once the Suez canal is reopened, but one might well question the argument that a token increase in South African naval strength even if combined with full Royal Navy co-operation is the answer to such a threat. Strategic studies addressing this question have concluded that the minimal force in the area should consist of a couple of nuclear-powered attack submarines, an aircraft carrier, and assorted support warships a requirement which the Royal Navy itself cannot fulfill.

The need to protect the Cape route is obviously closely related to the Soviet expansion in the area since the threat to these shipping

1. House of Commons Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 694, 28 Apr. 1964, Col.203

lanes is naturally assumed to come from Soviet naval forces. Such a threat is much more vivid than the concept of the menace of unchallenged Soviet power because Britain has had the shipping lanes on which she depends for survival threatened twice in this century. With 25% of her food and feeding stuffs and 30% of her oil using this route, her concern for the security of the Cape is certainly warranted.¹ To those who might argue that such an interdiction of supply lines could only occur if the powers were engaged in an all-out war which due to its devastating nature makes any discussion of shipping lanes meaningless, one can respond by quoting President Kennedy who stated "the greatest danger to the West is being nibbled to death in conditions of nuclear stalemate".² The closing of the Suez Canal has thus served to highlight the importance of the Cape route and even with the Canal's return to operation in the near future shipping around the Cape will probably maintain its peak both because of the advent of supertankers which are too large for Suez and because of the reluctance of shipping firms to rely on the volatile conditions of the Middle East. The strategic importance of the Cape route is undeniable, but once again one can cast doubts on the ability of the South African Navy, even if it were allowed to purchase any number of ships, to cope with the existing, or the potential threat.

1. House of Commons Debate, Vol. 805, 3 Nov. 1970, Col. 328.

2. Quoted in "The Cape Route" / report of a seminar held at the Royal United Service Institution (London: RUSI, Feb. 1970), p.1.

The matter of airfields and overflying rights likewise has great strategic significance especially when one considers that in 1964 one third of British forces deployed overseas were East of Suez and in potential need of rapid resupply and reinforcement. With only four possible routes from Britain to the Indian Ocean, the potential problem is soon apparent. The Libya-Sudan route to Aden and Singapore is restricted by the understanding that no flights for military purposes will be permitted if the conflict is with other Arab countries. The route from Cyprus across Turkey, Iran and Pakistan brings aircraft dangerously close to the Soviet border and is subject to a shift of allegiances with these countries. The third route is politically secure, but is four times as long since it is the westward route across the United States and the Pacific Ocean (United Kingdom to Aden - 16,780 miles). The fourth route involves flying across the African subcontinent which, with the exception of South Africa, is politically unreliable. Thus it is quite obvious that the air route across South Africa is indeed the best option available under conditions of international stress. Nevertheless such a requirement must be evaluated using present rather than past realities so that as Britain terminates all its commitments East of Suez, access to such a reliable air route has limited rather than essential importance. In fact it soon becomes obvious that the whole strategic significance of the Cape area can be summed up in words such as "important but not essential", and should therefore not be considered to be an overriding factor when deciding the pertinent policy.

Another argument which is usually presented concurrently with the strategic one is the view that the Simonstown Agreement requires

Britain to supply South Africa with the necessary equipment to carry out the role of defending the Cape route. The fact that the agreement carries an implied obligation since the negotiation of an agreement necessarily involves a willingness to supply the other partner with the means to carry it out is what the South African government refers to as the "spirit" of the Agreement. It is this implied obligation what has been used by the Conservative party both as a reason for supplying South Africa with weapons during periods when the Conservatives were in power and as one of the main themes of their exhortations aimed at convincing Labour to do likewise. When referring to this obligation, the word "implied" is emphasized because any contractual obligation under the Agreement had been fulfilled by 1963 through the sale of various naval weapons systems. It is nevertheless quite obvious that the Conservatives and the South African regime consider such an obligation to be truly binding. Not only have they stated so unequivocally, but also the Conservatives have backed their position by means of a Law Officer's opinion of the legal implications of the Agreement. The conclusion of this opinion stated that Britain had a legal commitment to provide South Africa with the WASP helicopters for the frigates provided under the Agreement.¹ The validity of this legal study, though, is highly questionable since it is based on the Vienna Convention adopted in 1969 which contains a non-retroactive clause thus negating its application to an agreement reached in 1955. Such technicalities seldom bother politicians and consequently the Conservatives feel that there is a legal obligation for Britain to provide arms for South Africa's external defense.

1. G.Laurie, "Britain's obligations under the Simonstown Agreements", Int. Affairs (Oct.1971).

There are also those Conservatives who felt that the Agreement makes South Africa Britain's ally as Mr. Barber noted in March 1970 by stating 'South Africa is our ally and we will treat it as such'.¹ Under that assumption, the provision of self-defence armaments is certainly warranted and cannot be contested although one may well wonder about the value of such an alliance to Britain.

While strategic considerations and the need to uphold the Simonstown Agreement form the core of the public statements in favour of the arms trade with South Africa, economic factors are of equal or perhaps greater importance but are not made public due to a desire to avoid creating an impression that ideals are being sacrificed for the sake of money. Nevertheless, statements such as the one by Mr. Wall, Conservative M.P. for Maltenprice, which noted "why should my constituents be put out of work when French and Italian workers thrive on contracts worth millions of pounds?"² certainly express the economic impact of this issue. Such a concern for the economic aspects of this arms trade is not restrict to the Conservative camp, for it was Harold Wilson as Prime Minister who was quick to emphasize that an arms embargo did not affect the position on general trade and agreed with the view that trade was not an adequate means of expressing detestation of particular policies.³

1. Quoted in M. Christie, The Simonstown Agreements, p.15.

2. The Times, 29 June 1970, p.9.

3. House of Commons Debates, 25 November, 1964, Vol. 702, col.1782.

The economic factors themselves can be subdivided into trade and investment, balance of payments, and business expectations and each one of these provides a powerful argument for avoiding a regrettable confrontation between the two countries. The importance of South Africa as Britain's trading partner is immediately apparent when one notes that British exports to South Africa total over £300 m. a year making it Britain's fourth largest market, and Britain relies on South Africa for various raw materials including chrome and antimony. British investments in South Africa are likewise a powerful motive for ensuring a close relationship since they are valued at well over £1,000 million which result in annual earnings exceeding £60 million.² It is not surprising that the realists would hesitate to jeopardize such holdings for the sake of ideal. Additionally there is the economic reality of the sale of the weapons systems themselves which is clearly illustrated by the over £200 million worth of equipment which France sold to South Africa during the 1964-70 British embargo. The social and economic repercussions to Britain in relinquishing this trade to the French is clearly illustrated by a statement by Mr. Marten, Minister of Aviation, in May 1963 in which he asserted that in the case of the 16 Buccaneer aircraft, a contract which amounted to £20 million, some 50 companies were involved in the manufacture, and the work involved a year's employment for 25,000 people including 4,000 in electronics and 8,000 in ancillary industries.²

1. D. Austin, Britain and South Africa (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) p.155.

2. House of Commons Debates, Vol. 677, 6 May 1963, Col. 25.

All of the economic considerations mentioned so far quite obviously have direct effects on Britain's balance of payments. Economic estimates in 1964 noted that the disruption of trade with South Africa would have the effect of a loss of 25% of exports (although some of these would be redirected), a loss of £60 million a year in foreign exchange (the return on investments), and the need to redirect imports at a higher cost. These estimates concluded that Britain would experience a £300 million worsening of her balance of payments in the first year.¹ Since the favourable balance of visible trade rose from £32 million to £84 million in 1963 and has shown steady improvement since then, the effect on the balance of payments has become more significant with the passage of time. If to these figures one were to add the £200 million worth of sales that went to France *vice* Britain, it becomes apparent that the impact of a breakdown in relations between the two countries would be significant indeed.

Businessmen themselves are obviously quite concerned with the economic developments of the issue and through the use of various lobbies create an additional pressure on politicians in favour of the arms trade. Their involvement in the issue became blatantly obvious shortly before the 1970 elections when numerous business groups travelled to South Africa to try and persuade South African authorities not to commit themselves to arms purchases from France or other European countries by giving assurances that when the Conservatives returned to power the embargo would end. The Confederation of British Industry meanwhile was urging its members to strengthen their ties with South Africa "against the day when the present government's irresponsible

1. D.Austin, Britain and South Africa, p.160.

obstacles are removed".¹

The economic pressures favouring the arms trade are therefore very real indeed and while one may refute the argument that normal trade and investment are necessarily threatened by a refusal to sell armaments to South Africa, though there is strong evidence of some damaging effect during the 1964-70 embargo, the remaining economic considerations are still valid. The essence of this economic argument was perhaps best expressed by Geoffrey Rippon who observed that the Labour government's policy of giving greater responsibility to South Africa for defending the Cape while refusing to sell her arms to make that defense effective created a situation where the only beneficiaries were other Western European countries who were ready to step in and supply South Africa's needs.²

The realists, though, are not content with this stalemate between idealistic and realistic considerations, and they thus seek to minimize the conflict between them. Not only do they verbally condemn apartheid at every conceivable opportunity, but they also note that the arms in question are for external defense and not for repression and emphasize that isolation and ostracism are not the solution to the problem. This attempts to differentiate between weapons used for external defense and those used for repression and anti-guerilla purposes forms part of every Conservative speech on the subject of the arms trade. One may well wonder about the validity of such a differentiation in the case of the Buccaneer bombers. The view that isolation and ostracism are no effective in attempting to change Southern African

1. Stanley Vys, "Tories to Vorster: Hold Arms deal" The Observer, 21 Jan. 1968 p.1.

2. G. Rippon, "The Importance of South Africa" Survival (London: Institute for Strategic Studies, Sept. 1970).

policy is rather effectively summarized in a letter from Mr. Heath to the Archbishop of Canterbury in November 1970 where he noted that there is no disagreement over the moral issue of apartheid, the difference is over the political question of how to deal with it. While some oppose the sale of arms to South Africa and others oppose any contact at all with such a repressive regime, Mr. Heath emphasizes that the Conservatives believe that a conciliatory approach is what is called for.¹

The Labour Party meanwhile has been unyielding in its anti-apartheid stance and has supported it with words as well as deeds. Nevertheless, as politicians they have been fully aware of the dangers inherent in any attempt to reconcile moral strategic and economic losses with the gains from doing what is thought to be morally right and have thus come to rely on the United Nations resolution on an arms embargo of South Africa as well as the Black African and Commonwealth reaction to British arms trade with South Africa as the real substance of their argument.

The United Nations resolution of 7 August 1963 called for the immediate suspension of sale and shipment of armaments to South Africa, and this was broadened in December of the same year to include equipment and materials for the manufacturing^{of} armaments. The resolution, though, was not mandatory and since Britain had abstained in the vote, she was not morally or legally bound to abide by it. Yet in November 1964 when Mr. Wilson announced the embargo on South Africa the reason given for such an action was the United Nations resolution. In May 1970

1. The Times, 16 November, 1970, p.5.

such an attitude was still prevalent as Lord Winterbottom, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Defense, quoted the United Nations resolution as being the primary reason for the embargo when he was offered the opportunity to use the apartheid issue by Baroness Gaitskell, he simply continued to insist that Her Majesty's government was bound by the United Nations resolution.¹

Those who support Labour's position also point to the reaction of Black African nations as well as members of the Commonwealth to this arms trade as evidence that their stance is right. Dr. Kaunda, President of Zambia, voiced the feelings of the African nations by stating that South Africa was the enemy and anyone who helped an enemy could not be considered to be a friend. He went on to add that Britain was threatening the Commonwealth by aiding a racist regime.² In another interview he stated that Britain, in providing arms to South Africa, must decide between investments in South Africa and the rest of the Continent and the same choice in strategic interest since other African nations could well turn to non-western or anti-western powers.³ The Commonwealth reaction to Britain's 1970 announcement that arms sales to South Africa would be resumed certainly supports Dr. Kaunda's opinion as Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ceylon all threatened to withdraw from the Commonwealth while Malaysia suggested that Britain should be the one to go. A letter from Mr. Trudeau, Canada's Prime Minister, strongly recommended that Mr. Heath should reconsider such a step was clear evidence that the Commonwealth's white members were also

1. House of Lords Debate, vol. 310, 12 May 1970, Col. 494.

2. H. Berkeley, "Friends and enemies", The Observer, 11 Oct. 1970, p.11.

3. The Observer, 28 June 1970, p.8.

against a resumption of the trade. The Conservative government was quite obviously not expecting such a strong reaction to its policy which perhaps demonstrates the Conservatives' failure to grasp the emotional impact of this particular issue. Hence while the Conservatives used logic such as the strategic importance of the Cape or the Soviet threat, African nations could only focus on their deep-seated hatred of apartheid.

Thus while Labour was pursuing an objective based on ideals, it was doing so by highlighting what is considered to be a legal obligation to refrain from supplying South Africa with arms as well as the loss of potential trade, investment, and goodwill in all those countries opposed to such a trade.

Before noting what effects on policy this conflict between realists and idealists has had, one should focus on a side-effect of the arms trade which those who favour such trade have either overlooked or simply chosen to ignore, this side-effect is the "legitimizing" role of the arms trade. Thus arguments that arguments provided are intended for maritime defense only are meaningless if it is shown that South Africa is not particularly interested in maritime defense and thus wants the weapons more for the respectability which such trade gives her than for their defense value. Likewise if the rest of the African world takes a similar attitude, arguments of "strategic value" and "Soviet threat" will fall on deaf ears, and all that will be perceived is that Britain is taking the side of the racist regime in South Africa.

Looking at the South African military establishment, one quickly ascertains that it is completely oriented towards an anti-guerrilla role in composition of the forces, their training, and the

nature of their exercises. Most of the defense budget goes to the Army, the Air Force, and para-military forces including a part-time rural militia called the kommandos (75,000 men given special training for internal security duties). In the 1969-70 defense budget only 9.5% was allotted to maritime defense, and the training of naval forces focuses on internal security as well rather than any Soviet naval threat.¹ The largest defense exercise in years, conducted in 1969 was a simulated anti-guerrilla operation involving 5000 troops, squadrons of helicopters, and a variety of strike-bombers and other aircraft; nothing even resembling such an exercise has been conducted in the area of maritime defense. In 1963 the South African defense minister stated military priorities quite clearly when he noted: "The first task of the defense forces is to help the police maintain law and order",² such a policy remains unchanged.

Shortly before the Conservative government's statement on the intention of resuming the arms trade, Mr. Botha, South African Minister of Defense, had noted that the Simonstown Agreement was of value only if a condition of actual co-operation between self respecting countries existed, and by emphasizing the "self-respecting" aspect he was underlining the deeper significance of such a trade. Hence the South African reaction to the sale of seven anti helicopters was one of utter delight since it was a symbol of the country's acceptability as a military and diplomatic partner. There can thus be little doubt as to the fact that South Africa wants Britain to provide these arms and maintain the Simonstown Agreement because it is the only semblance of an alliance and acceptability which it has with the west.

1. C.Kemp, "South Africa's Defense Program" Survival (London: 1972, July/Aug. 1972) p.160.

2. M.Christie, The Simonstown Agreements, p.9.

While South Africa seeks this trade to gain some measure of respectability and legitimacy, Black Africa shares this perception with South Africa and hence is being not appeased by this trade. As noted above, Dr. Kaunda makes this feeling perfectly clear. This alienation of the remainder of Africa by supplying arms to South Africa in the long run could well allow the Soviet Union to exploit her overwhelming preponderance in the arms, and such British policy could thus be clearly counterproductive.

This question of 'respectability' thus is clearly a major issue in this conflict between realists and idealists. From a commercial standpoint, this respectability which the arms shipments would give South Africa is considered a necessity to create a friendly atmosphere in which British companies can operate. Those opposed to the sale of arms note that the provision of weapons enables the South African government to placidly reject release of protests about apartheid, the British government regarding the South African regime as a legitimate one. Only does the sales of arms as a practical demonstration of this. The issue is clearly uppermost in the minds of the South African regime which realises that while it is able to obtain any weapon system from any number of sources, respectability as a recognised member of the Western alliance can only be provided by Britain or the United States, and the latter has clearly shown no sign of yielding on this issue.

Having exposed the various pressures and considerations involved in this issue, one can then appraise the effect which these have had on the final policy. In this particular case such an exercise is simplified by the split between the Labour and Conservative parties on the issue which allows one to note policy changes which follow a change in government. Nevertheless, one should not overlook the restraining

forces which opposing pressures have on a given policy since these are of equal significance.

During the period before the UN embargo of 1963, Britain was content to supply South Africa with any and all armaments that were requested. After the UN resolution was passed, though, and even as the Conservatives remained in office, a differentiation between weapons used for external and internal defense was made, and sale of the latter group of arms was suspended. In 1964 Labour came to power, and the idealists gained the upper hand as a total arms embargo was soon declared. A more detailed examination of this embargo will reveal that such policy was not immune to opposing pressures. Hence the honouring of a previous contract for 16 Buccaneer aircraft, a concession to the socio-economic considerations mentioned before. The sale of spares for weapons systems acquired prior to 1964 was also continued although their being denied could have been the most effective blow against the South African regime since such a step would have immobilized most of the British aircraft in South Africa's inventory and at that time practically all South African aircraft were of British manufacture. In this case the possibility of economic retaliation probably played a major role in encouraging a more moderate stance. Finally, throughout the 1961-70 embargo period Labour demonstrated notable concern over the Simonstown agreements, and short of supplying arms it did everything possible to ensure that Britain continued to enjoy the strategic advantages of such an agreement. Thus during this period a naval officer with a small staff was stationed in Cape Town and the two navies continued to perform joint naval exercises.

As the Conservatives came to power in 1970, the realists had gained the advantage, and there were visions of substantial sales of

Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft, frigates and destroyers, Buccaneer bombers, and sea dart missiles all designed to strengthen South Africa's external defense and boost Britain's economy. The sales and contracts for the first year amounted to £12 million and included seven ASF helicopters, six HS-125 transports, three HS-740 transports and one survey ship. This, though, was the limit of the Conservative effort to overturn Labour's policy because the resistance encountered both domestically and within the Commonwealth rapidly neutralized the realist's arguments. Hence the sale of weapons for "external defense" was modified to include only "maritime defense" systems and finally reduced to those considered to be a legal obligation under the Simonstown Agreements. Following the second election of 1974, with Labour returning to power, the idealists recorded another victory as Mr. Wilson stated Britain's intention of renegotiating the Simonstown Agreements with a view of disengaging Britain from any existing military obligations towards South Africa.

Thus Britain's arms trade with South Africa is indeed a classic example of the confrontation between realists and idealists in the formulation of policy. It contains all the political pressures which characterize the arms trade, and the effect of these pressures on actual policy have been readily apparent. The Conservatives' strategic and economic arguments failed to achieve success because their significance was overstated, and these realists failed to understand the emotional nature of the issue. Labour, on the other hand, has shown an acute awareness of the realities of this sensitive situation and has made allowance for them in pursuing its ideals.

One can thus conclude that this confrontation between realism and idealism does exist and is not simply a theoretical concept. Decision-makers are aware of the existing clash, and consequently the administrative decision-making process has been designed to ensure the expression of divergent views at all levels and to prevent the sacrificing of ideals by bureaucratic rule. Nevertheless, in spite of all this, the balance is practically always tipped in favour of the realists. Yet ideals are expressed, are reflected in foreign policy, and, as noted above, do have their moments of triumph.

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